

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 PC-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 OMB-01 NIC-01 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01

IO-13 OPR-02 RSR-01 /149 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4966

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 3217

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, PINT, PINS

SUBJ: REACTION TO VOTE FRAUD CHARGES

REF: SANTIAGO 3195

1. SUMMARY. GOVT DENIED ALLEGATIONS OF MASSIVE VOTE FRAUD IN MARCH 4 ELECTION (REFTEL) AND CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES ESTABLISHED SPECIAL INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE. MEANWHILE PROBLEMS CONCERNING OCCUPIED INDUSTRIES, POSSIBLE TERRORIST ACTIONS BY NOW-UNDERGROUND PATRIA Y LIBERTAD, AND ILLEGAL WEAPONS CONTINUED. END SUMMARY.

2. ALLEGATIONS OF MASSIVE VOTE FRAUD (REFTEL) PRODUCED INTENSE REACTION FROM ALL POLITICAL SECTORS. GENERAL GOVT THRUST HAS BEEN TO DENY FLATLY ANY ELECTORAL SHENANIGANS AND TO IMPUGN MOTIVES OF THOSE MAKING CHARGES. OPPOSITION STRESSED GRAVE IMPLICATIONS OF CHARGES AND DEMANDED FULL INVESTIGATION.

3. MININTERIOR BRIONES, HOSTING JULY 18 PRESS CONFERENCE, SAID GOVT FAVORED FULL INVESTIGATION SINCE IT IS CONVINCED CHARGES ARE UNTRUE. HERIBERTO BENQUIS, MEMBER OF UP-ALIGNED RADICAL PARTY AND DIRECTOR OF CIVIL REGISTRY, AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR ISSUING IDENTIFICATION/VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS, "CATE-CONFIDENTIAL

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GORICALLY AND ABSOLUTELY" RULED OUT MULTIPLE VOTING. ELECTORAL

REGISTRY DIRECTOR ANDRES RILLON (CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT) WAS MORE EQUIVOCAL; WHILE ALLOWING FOR POSSIBILITY FO MULTIPLE REGISTRATIONS AND VOTING, HE NOTED COMPREHENSIVE EFFORTS PRIOR TO MARCH 4 ELECTION BY HIS OFFICE, ASSISTED BY MILITARY OFFICERS, TO UPDATE VOTER REGISTRATION LISTS AND PRVENT EXACTLY THIS TYPE OF FRAUD. GOVT SUBSEQUENTLY ISSUED STATEMENT TERMING CHARGES "CONJECTURES AND FANTASIES" AND PART OF "CALCULATED CAMPAIGN" TO TARNISH CHILEAN IMAGE OF HONEST ELECTIONS. STATEMENT CITED DECLARATION EARLIER IN DAY BY CATHOLIC UNIV RECTOR FERNANDO CASTILLO (LEFT-WING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT) IN WHICH HE STRESSED LAW SCHOOL DEAN DEL VALLE WAS SPEAKING ONLY FOR HIMSELF AND WAS NOT AUTHROIZED TO INVOKE EITHER UNIVERSITY'S OR RECTOR'S NAME "TO GIVE A SUPPOSED GUARANTEE OF SOBRIETY AND RIGOROUSNESS" TO ADMITTEDLY PARTIAL RESULTS OF HIS GROUP'S STUDY.

4. CHAMBER OF DEPKTIES PASSED RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE INSTRUCTED TO REPORT WITHIN 60 DAYS. OPPOSITION MAJORITY PREVIOUSLY DEFEATED PROPOSAL BY UP DEPUTIES DEMANDING REPORT IN 20 DAYS. OPPOSITION PRESS, MEANWHILE, QUOTED ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES OF ALLEPED REGISTRATION FRAUD IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS.

5. STATEMENT BY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF UP CHARGED FRAUD ALLEGATIONS WERE PART OF RIGHTIST CONSPIRACY DESIGNED TO CREATE ATMOSPHERE SUITABLE FOR OVERTHROW OF ALLENDE GOVT AND TO MANUFACTURE "SMOKESCREEN" AROUND THEIR OWN PARTICIPATION IN JUNE 29 COUP ATTEMPT.

6. IN TV INTERVIEWS DOMINATED BY EXPRESSIONS OF SHOCK AND OUTRAGE BY OPPOSITION SPOKESMEN, SOCIALIST SENATOR ERIC SCHNAKE WITH ABSOLUTELY STRAIGHT FACE AGREED CHARGES WERE EXTREMELY SERIOUS, NOTED THERE WAS NO WAY TO TELL FOR WHOM THE ALLEGED MULTIPLE VOTERS HAD CAST THEIR BALLOTS, CONCLUDED THAT MANDATE OF ENTIRE CONGRESS ELECTED MARCH 4 MAY BE VITIATED AND THEREFORE CONGRESS MIGHT HAVE TO BE CLOSED.

7. IN OTHER DEVELOPMENTS, CHILEAN MANUFACTURERS ASSN. (SOFOFA) ISSUED STATEMENT VOWING TO USE ALL LEGAL RECOURSES AVAILABLE TO FORCE RETURN TO OWNERS OF OCCUPIED INDUSTRIES. ACCORDING TO INDEPENDENT LA TERCERA, IN AT LEAST ONE
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FACTORY WORKERS WERE OUSTED BY POLICE ACTING UNDER COURT ORDER (SEE ALSO SANTIAGO A-146). OTHER PRESS ITEMS REPORT A FEW PRIVATE SETTLEMENTS BETWEEN OWNERS AND WORKERS. CORDON CERRILLOS WORKERS BLOCKED MAJOR SANTIAGO ROAD FOR FIVE HOURS JULY 18 DEMANDING OCCUPIED INDUSTRIES PASS TO GOVT SECTOR OF ECONOMY. WORKERS FROM CORDON VICUNA MACKENNA ESTABLISHED ROAD BLOCKS IN SOUTHERN AREA OF SANTIAGO MORNING JULY 19 FOR SAME REASON.

8. POLICE CONTINUED UNSUCCESSFUL SEARCH FOR PATRIA Y LIBERTAD LEADERS IN WAKE OF THREATS ISSUED BY ORGANIZATION (SANTIAGO 3194). RESULT OF INTENSIVE POLICE ACTIVITY JULY 18 IN WHICH SOME 30 HOUSES WERE ALLEGEDLY SEARCHED WAS ARREST OF TWO KNOWN PICKPOCKETS ON VAGRANCY CHARGES. UP PRESS MAINTAINED WARNINGS OF POSSIBLE PYL TERRORIST ATTACKS, INCLUDING POSSIBLE ASSASSINATION OF PRES ALLENDE OR SOME LEADING OPPOSITION FIGURE SUCH AS SENATE PRES FREI OR GEN VIAUX, THE LATTER AS WAY TO CAUSE BLAME TO FALL ON LEFTISTS. DYNAMITE EXPLODED HARMLESSLY EARLY MORNING JULY 18 AT HOME RADICAL PARTY (UP) DEPUTY CAMILO SALVO. PRESS ALSO REPORTED ARMY CONDUCTED SEARCHES FOR ILLEGAL ARMS IN PUNT ARENAS, AND CARABINEROS RAIDED SANTIAGO TV/9 STUDIOS FOR SAME PURPOSE; NO RESULTS OF RAIDS YET AVAILABLE.

JULY 19, NAVY CONDUCTED RAID ON GOVT-CONTROLLED GAS COMPANY IN VALPARAISO AND ARMY RAIDED BREWERY IN NEARBY LIMACHE; RIGHTIST LA SEGUNDA REPORTED WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVES WERE FOUND IN BOTH PLACES. MORE MIR POSTERS URGING SOLDIERS TO DISOBEY COUP-MINDED OFFICERS APPEARED IN VALPARAISO, ANTOFAGASTA, AND BIO BIO; 10 PERSONS REPORTEDLY ARRESTED. CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES PASSED AND SENT TO SENATE MILITARY PAY RAISE BILL, ALTHOUGH OPPOSITION MAJORITY CHANGED SEVERAL OF EXECUTIVE'S PROPOSALS FOR TAX INCREASES TO MEET COSTS. BOTH MINDEFENSE ALMEYDA AND AIR FORCE CINC GEN RUIZ PUBLICLY DENIED PERSISTENT RUMORS THAT RUIZ HAD RESIGNED. OPPOSITION PRESS FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHS OF CAR BELONGING TO PRESIDENT'S PRIVATE BODYGUARD DETAIL (GAP) WHICH WAS INVOLVED IN TRAFFIC ACCIDENT; CAR ALLEGEDLY CONTAINED SEVERAL UNREGISTERED AUTOMATIC WEAPONS.

9. COMMENT. IT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND THAT ELECTION FRAUD IS ALLEGED-

NOT PROVED. WE HOPE TO OBTAIN SOME OF DOCUMENTATION,CHECK
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WITH KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCES, AND MAKE BETTER JUDGMENT ON THE
SUBSTANT OF THE MATTER BEFORE LONG.
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